

wherein the annular inlet draws both the first gas and the second gas away from the probe surface.

³⁴
~~120~~: A method of creating a microvacuum chamber between a probe surface having a first aperture therein and a work surface, the probe surface oriented toward the work surface, the method comprising:

placing a vacuum source in fluid communication with the first aperture at a side of the probe surface oriented away from the work surface;

operating the vacuum source; and

adjusting a gap between the probe surface and the work surface so that an ambient gas between the probe surface and the work surface has a viscous character, the viscous character causing the flow of the ambient gas into a region between the probe surface and the work surface surrounding the first aperture to be restricted.--

REMARKS

Claims 1-4 are original claims. Claims 5 through 90 were misnumbered in the original application. They have been renumbered, and have been canceled. Claims 91-120 are new. The pending claims in this application are 1-4 and 91-120.

CONCLUSION

If the Examiner believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, please telephone the undersigned at 650-326-2400.

Respectfully submitted,

David Slone

David N. Slone
Reg. No. 28,572

TOWNSEND and TOWNSEND and CREW LLP
Two Embarcadero Center, 8th Floor
San Francisco, California 94111-3834
Tel: (650) 326-2400 / Fax: (415) 576-0300
DNS:dd
PA 3203765 v1

b